

Application No. 09/527,313
Amendment "F" dated January 25, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed January 14, 2005

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed January 14, 2005, considered claims 45 and 47-74. Of those claims, claims 45, 47-55, 71 and 72 were found allowable.¹ By this paper, the remaining claims 56-70 and 73-74 are being cancelled to expedite the issuance of the allowed claims.

With regard to the cancelled claims, Applicants respectfully submit that the claim cancellations should not be construed as Applicants acquiescing to the purported teachings of the cited art or agreeing with the merits of the asserted rejections. In fact, to the contrary, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the purported teachings of the cited art and to traverse the rejections of record at any appropriate time should it arise with regard to the cancelled claims, such as, for example, during prosecution of a continuation, or any other related application, which the Applicants intend to file to pursue the cancelled claims.

Inasmuch as this paper resolves all outstanding issues of record in this case, Applicants respectfully submit that the application and pending claims 45, 47-55 and 71-72 should now be found allowable.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 25 day of January 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



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¹ Claims 56, 60-64 and 67-70 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by newly cited Proehl (U.S. Patent No. 6,577,350). Claims 57-59 65 and 66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Proehl as applied to claims 56 and 64, and further in view of Usui (U.S. Patent No. 6,075,570). Although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the prior art status of the cited art at any appropriate time, should it arise.